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SOVIET UNION/
TERRORISM

RATHER: Terror, sabotage, assassination--it is the stuff of spy novels. It also is real life. CBS News correspondent Bill McLaughlin has seen classified documents that tend to confirm the existence of a highly secret Soviet military group whose mission is terror, sabotage, assassination.

MCLAUGHLIN: It is called Spetsnaz--Special Military Purposes Unit. It is controlled by the GRU--Soviet Military Intelligence. Classified U.S. documents confirm recent revelations about Spetsnaz by a Soviet military defector. The roughly 15,000-man force is trained at secret centers in Odessa and Kirovograd. And what it is trained to do should make U.S. military planners more concerned with security, especially with U.S. military bases abroad. The Spetsnaz training centers contain mock-ups of made-in-America targets--the cruise and Pershing missiles and jet fighters like the F-15. Spetsnaz is trained to sabotage and destroy these missiles and aircraft. It is also trained to penetrate hundreds of miles into enemy territory with a sinister mission: to kill the other side's political and military leaders. Units are now deployed in East Germany, Czechoslovakia and Hungary. East Germany is also home for a Spetsnaz naval brigade that uses Norway and Sweden for live and dangerous training exercises. Over the past two years, Swedish and Norwegian destroyers have hunted their coastlines trying to catch Soviet subs that seem to appear and disappear at will. Intelligence sources believe they are Spetsnaz minisubs manned by sabotage and assassination teams training to destroy enemy submarine bases and coastal defenses. The recruits are the best, the brightest and the toughest in the Soviet Union. But the average Soviet citizen does not know that Spetsnaz exists. However, some of its best agents are known at home as something else: sports heroes. Experts on the Soviet Union say that Soviet military intelligence uses sports as a cover and a reward for qualified Spetsnaz agents, thus making it possible that a medal at the Los Angeles Olympic Games could go to a man from Spetsnaz. Bill McLaughlin, CBS News, the State Department.

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